



Models of Therapeutic Action Spring 2020

Section I: Frances Arnold, Ph.D. and Trude Kleinschmidt, M.D.

In this course we will explore the issue of therapeutic action. We will study a key question in our work: how does psychotherapy help people change? It is not obvious why sitting and talking to another person should be helpful in symptom relief or character transformation. Although psychoanalysis has always emphasized the role of insight in change, it became clear to Freud and his followers that insight alone often did not lead inexorably to change. In recent decades, debates about therapeutic action have pivoted around the point of the relative importance of insight versus relationship factors. The therapeutic influence of the treatment relationship has gained increasing specificity, clarity, and importance. Even more recently, psychoanalytic ideas of therapeutic action have benefitted from a rich infusion from several collateral sources: neuroscience, infant research and theories of “the field,” chaos, attachment and mentalization (among others).

As we read and discuss some of the papers that we believe capture the spirit of both central and evolving aspects of therapeutic action, we would like to think together about the advantages and dilemmas inherent in integration of disparate theories.

As we read these articles together, we hope that you will try to think about the following questions: What does this author think is helpful to patients? Is this one of the ways that I think I have helped my patients? Can I use this author’s ideas in my clinical work? Does this article bring to mind any clinical vignettes, which either confirm or refute its arguments?

Session I: March 26

History and Fundamental Tensions: Relationship vs Insight, Experience vs Interpretation, and Evolving Theory

In this session, we will discuss the first person, retrospective account of Harry Guntrip’s experience in two, very different, personal psychoanalyses - with two well-known British object relations theorists, Fairbairn and Winnicott. This account illuminates many of the themes and questions we will be exploring throughout this course: what are the respective roles of insight versus the therapeutic “relationship;” what makes for an effective and alive treatment experience; what is the role of interpretation; what is the impact of the therapist’s life and character; what is the role of mourning in the therapeutic process?

Guntrip, H. (1975). My Experience of Analysis with Fairbairn and Winnicott. *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, 2: 145-156. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional Reading:

Greenberg, J. (2015). Therapeutic Action and the Analyst's Responsibilities. *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.*, 63(1):15-32. [PEP Web Link](#)

Greenberg, J. (2011). Theories of Therapeutic Action and Their Clinical Consequences, In *Textbook of Psychoanalysis*, Gabbard, Litowitz and Williams (Eds.), Am. Psychiatric Publishing, Washington D.C., pps 269-282. [Available in the library: Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsl.org.]

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, fellows will be able to compare the roles of insight versus the therapeutic relationship in therapeutic change.

Session II: April 2 The Nature of Therapeutic Action

In this session, we will discuss two classic articles that consider the essential elements of therapeutic action. "Remembering, Repeating and Working Through" is considered one of Freud's best known "technique" papers. In it, he lays out his ideas about the importance of the patient's communications through remembering and repeating in the transference, as well as ideas about the complex issue of resistance. The Strachey paper is a dense, but classic theoretical work which takes up Freud's original ideas and elaborates on the role of resistance, considers the analyst's function as a new good object who can alleviate the patient's self criticism, and attempts to define what makes for an effective interpretation that will lead to insight and change.

Freud, S. (1914). Remembering Repeating and Working Through. SE 12. pages 147-165. [PEP Web Link](#)

Strachey, J. (1969 reprint of 1934 article). The Nature of the Therapeutic Action of Psychoanalysis. *Int J. Psychoanalysis*. 50:275-292. [PEP Web Link](#)

Objectives:

After this session, fellows will be able to describe two technical ideas about the role of insight that are necessary for therapeutic change.

APRIL 9 - NO CLASS

Session III: April 16 Therapist as New Good Object

In this session, we will discuss articles that will consider the role and function of the analyst/therapist in regard to therapeutic action. Winnicott's timeless paper takes up the difficulty and importance of tolerating and working with hate in the counter-transference, and the therapeutic action inherent in doing so. Loewald's paper is a complex, but beautiful paper about the analyst/therapist's function as a new good object, which presages intersubjective two-person theory, characterizing the analyst/therapist as "a participant observer," and "a co-creator on the analytic stage." Drawing from multiple theoretical perspectives - ego psychology, drive theory,

developmental theory, object relations - Loewald gives us a surprisingly modern account of how development resumes and leads to change. His ideas about transference as a life force, in which “ghosts may be brought alive....in order to be laid to rest as ancestors” is one of the more moving accounts in our literature.

Winnicott, DW. (1949) Hate in The Countertransference. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.* 30:69-75. [PEP Web Link](#)

Loewald, Hans. (1960). On the Therapeutic Action in Psychoanalysis. *Int J. Psychoanalysis.* 41:16-33. [PEP Web Link](#)

Objectives:

After this session, fellows will be able to describe two technical ideas about the role of insight that are necessary for therapeutic change.

Session IV: April 23 Defense Analysis and Self-Psychology

American Ego Psychology dominated psychoanalytic thinking from the post World War II era, to the 1980's. Paul Gray is known as a leading founder of ego psychology's defense analysis technique and theory of therapeutic action. In this session, we will contrast his model of change action, focused on drives and resistance, with that of the self-psychologists who approach change from a very different direction - that of empathic immersion in the patient's affective experience and the therapist's function as a mirroring self-object.

Gray, Paul. (1990). The Nature of the Therapeutic Action in Psychoanalysis. *JAPA.* 38:1083-1098. [PEP Web Link](#)

Ornstein, Paul. (1988). Multiple Curative Factors and Processes in the Psychoanalytic Psychotherapies. Chapter 8 in *How Does Treatment Help: On the Modes of Therapeutic Action of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy.* International Universities Press, 1988. Pages 105-126. [Available in the library: Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsl.org.]

Optional Reading:

Terman, David. (2011). Self-Psychology Chapter, In the *Textbook of Psychoanalysis* by Gabbard, Litowitz and Williams, Eds., Am. Psychiatric Publishing, Washington D.C., pps 199-210. [Available in the library: Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsl.org.]

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, fellows will be able to define defense analysis and list two differences between Ego Psychology and Self Psychology concepts of listening and therapeutic action.

Session V: April 30 Listening to Process

What do we listen for when we listen to clinical process? What is the leading edge or lens we try to hear? In this session, we will compare Schwaber's approach, which privileges the leading affective edge and the patient's vantage point, with Roth's Kleinian approach of listening for

deep unconscious impulses, particularly aggression, as well as the ways the patient may resist the therapist's analyzing capacities.

Schwaber, Evelyn. (1990). Interpretation and the Therapeutic Action of Psychoanalysis. *Int J Psychoanalysis*. 71:229-240. [PEP Web Link](#)

Roth, P. (2001). Mapping the Landscape: Levels of Transference Interpretation. *IJP*. 82:533-543. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional Reading:

Feldman, M. (1993). The Dynamics of Reassurance. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 74: 275-285. [PEP Web Link](#)

Joseph, B., (1986). Envy in Everyday Life. *Psychoanal. Psychother.*, 2(1): 13-22. [PEP Web Link](#)

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, fellows will be able to describe two different ways a therapist would listen to process, particularly feelings and emerging material from the patients' unconscious.

Session VI: May 7

Something More than Interpretation - Contributions from Child Analysis

Child analysts have much to teach all of us about therapeutic action. In this session, we will discuss two, very different descriptions of analytic process and explore their equally different ideas about what brings about change. Herzog's paper demonstrates his talent as a complex theorist, who draws on multiple perspectives and is able to look at the role of intergenerational trauma, object relations and ego psychology in the moving account of his work with a precocious young girl. Harrison, also describing work with a traumatized child, shows us how a non-linear dynamic systems theory perspective might account for therapeutic process.

Herzog, J.M. (2005). Los Degradados: Out, down, dead: Transmitted and inflicted trauma as... *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 86:291-310. [PEP Web Link](#)

Harrison, A.M. and Tronick, E.Z. (2007). Contributions to Understanding Therapeutic Change: Now We Have A Playground. *JAPA*, 55/3: 853-874. [PEP Web Link](#)

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, fellows will be able to explain child analyst's contributions about therapeutic action with both adult and child patients.

Session VII: May 14

The Role of the Analyst's and Patient's Identities and Internal Processes

In this session, we will consider therapeutic action in light of the use of the analyst's subjectivity, and internal processes, and their mutative interaction with that of the patient's. We will look at a seminal paper by Lew Aron, a founding relational theorist, in which he considers the importance and centrality of the patient's exploration of the analyst's subjectivity. We will also read a paper by James McLaughlin, a British Independent theorist, who explores the analyst's regressions,

during treatment, and the mutative impact of the analyst/therapist's insights into this part of his own subjectivity.

Aron, L. (1991). The Patient's Experience of the Analyst's Subjectivity. *Psychoanal. Dial.* 1(1): 29-51. [PEP Web Link](#)

McLaughlin, J.T. (1988). The Analyst's Insights. *Psychoanal. Q.*, 57:370-389. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional Reading:

Layton, L. (2006). Racial identities, Racial Enactments, and the Normative Unconscious Processes. *Psychoanal. Q.*, 75(1): 237-269. [PEP Web Link](#)

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, fellows will be able to describe two ways in which working with the analyst's subjectivity is an important part of therapeutic action.

Session VIII: May 21 Therapeutic Field and Tensions

Field Theory is a relatively new area of interest in North American Psychoanalysis. Reading Ferro, we will look at some basic concepts such as "the field," the jointly created narrative, the shared unconscious fantasy of the therapist/patient dyad, as well as the idea that both therapist and patient are attempting to come to terms with a shared emotional experience. In doing so, we will think about how these ideas may reshape our notions of therapeutic action. Drawing from Hoffman, we will think about the therapist's tensions from the field, and the dialectic between theory and analytic freedom.

Ferro, A. (2006). Clinical Implications of Bion's Thought. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 87(4), 989-1003. [PEP Web Link](#)

Hoffman, IZ. (1994). Dialectical Thinking, Therapeutic Action in Analytic Process... *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*. 62:187-218. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional Readings on Field Theory:

Ferro, A. (2002). The analytic dialogue: Possible worlds and transformation in the analytic field. In *The Analyst's Consulting Room*. East Essex: Brunner-Routledge. [Available in the library: Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsl.org.]

Civitaresse, Giuseppe & Ferro, Antonino (2013) The Meaning and the Use of Metaphor in Analytic Field Theory. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 33, 190-209. [PEP Web Link](#)

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, fellows will be able to describe two ideas about the tensions between theory and practice for the therapist.

Session IX: May 28

The Fundamental Role of Mourning

In this session, we will explore the nature and transformative role of mourning in the therapeutic process. We will consider the perspectives of theorists as they contrast mourning and melancholia, and acceptance versus denial (or manic attitude), toward reality and loss. We will also think about the relationship of these ideas to a sense of aliveness and deadness in the therapeutic process, and in life.

Freud, S. (1917). *Mourning and Melancholia*. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV (1914-1916): On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works, 237-258. [PEP Web Link](#)

Ogden, T. H. (2002). A New Reading of the Origins of Object-Relations Theory. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 83:767-782. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional Reading:

Steiner, J. (2005). The conflict between mourning and melancholia. *Psychanalytic Quarterly*, 73:83-104. [PEP Web Link](#)

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, fellows will be able to define Freud's and Ogden's ideas about the role of mourning in therapeutic action.

Session X: June 4

Therapeutic Action: What does this mean and who is changed?

In this session, we will think about what happens between an analyst and patient that makes for an alive experience that is transformative for both, as well as the relationship between them. In doing so, we will read Al Margulies account of an analysis that began during his training and spanned the arc of his analytic development and maturity. Margulies explores the topic of how patient and analyst impact each other, and are both changed by the clinical experience.

Margulies, A., Orgel, S., Poland, W.S. (2014). After the Storm: Living and Dying in Psychoanalysis. *J. Amer. Pshchoanal. Assn.*, 62:863-905. [PEP Web Link](#)

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, fellows will be able to describe three ideas about what is mutative and transformative for patient and analyst in an intensive psychodynamic treatment.